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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 13 titles deal with the following topics: the role of visual pattern perception in the development of children's reading skills; a comparison of students' silent reading, oral reading, and listening comprehension; semantic integration in normal and learning disabled children; grapho-semantic arraying by college freshmen in relation to selected measures of reading comprehension; reading strategies employed by non-proficient adult college students; the use of earliest childhood recollections in attempting to understand classroom behavior of students with reading problems; the correlation between reading ability and self-concept of community college freshmen; a comparison of the way normal and learning disabled students acquire information from orally presented stories; relationships between oral language factors and reading proficiency; learning disabilities as evidenced in low reading ability; the relationship between attitudes toward reading and toward self; reading achievement and attitudinal factors of disadvantaged students; and the relationship of figural analysis ability to reading improvement. (GW)

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Reading Achievement: Characteristics Associated with Success and Failure:

Abstracts of Doctoral Dissertations Published in Dissertation Abstracts International, January through March 1978 (Vol. 38 Nos. 7 through 9) Part Two

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A COMPARISON OF SILENT READING, ORAL READING, AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 3, 6, 9, AND 12

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VISUAL PERCEPTION: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDRENS' READING SKILLS

KAK, Anita Vasant, Ph.D.
Purdue University, 1977

Major Professors: Richard D. Arnold, Pose Lamb

The primary purpose of this investigation was to study the role of visual pattern perception in the development of reading skills in children, and the extent to which pattern perception skills relate to the childrens' reading difficulties. The rationale underlying the investigation is to assess the applicability of the advances made in the quantitative study of visual pattern perception to the study of perceptual processes of children with special emphasis upon problems associated with the development of reading skills.

The subjects were selected from a rural consolidated elementary school in mid-north Indiana. Forty-eight subjects were drawn from a pool of 170 subjects in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. Six good readers and six poor readers were selected from each grade. The selection was made by a reading specialist on the basis of Reading Subtest Scores of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Stanford Achievement Test and the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test. None of the subjects had ever repeated a grade.

The stimuli were pattern elements which are descriptive of alphanumeric characters. The stimuli consisted of angles, horizontal and vertical lines, and diagonal elements in left and right, up and down orientation. Reaction time served as a dependent variable. Subjects were tested individually for 15-minute sessions each day for six days. The experiment was replicated two weeks later using the same subjects and procedure.

A four factorial, repeated measures design and multidimensional scaling techniques were used for data analyses. The results of the present study revealed significant main effect for grades ($p \leq .001$), and reading levels ($p \leq .001$). The interaction of grades by reading levels was also significant ($p \leq .05$). It is evident that the poor readers were significantly slower in solving the problems than were the good readers and this was true for all grades. The results further showed significant learning effect ($p \leq .001$). However, the interaction of replications with grades ($p \leq .001$), reading levels ($p \leq .001$), grades and reading levels, suggests that how much is learned across replications depends upon the reading level and age. The results revealed that problems were differentially difficult ($p \leq .001$). The overriding conclusion which subsumes all others, is that performance on this set of problems can be used to discriminate among children with different degrees of reading levels.

Three dimensional scaling solutions were obtained for all the grades, reading levels and replications. The structure of the solutions did vary as a function of age and replications. It can be concluded that visual pattern perception is highly involved in the development of reading skills in children. The applicability of the multidimensional scaling proved to be highly beneficial. It is expected that the approach used here may lead to an early assessment and training of pre-readers or disabled readers, in visual perceptual tasks.

Order No. 77-30,091, 143 pages.

A COMPARISON OF SILENT READING, ORAL READING, AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 3, 6, 9, AND 12 Order No. 7719769

KIRKHAM, Sally Godenrath, Ph.D. The University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1977. 143pp. Supervisor: Professor Wayne Otto

The two main purposes of the study were to assess and compare students' literal comprehension of information read silently, read orally, or presented orally on videotape and to ascertain if any differences in literal comprehension, due to the mode of presentation, occur across a range of grade levels.

The rationale for conducting this study was based upon the need to extend the limited research comparing silent reading, oral reading, and listening comprehension by including subjects from a wide range of grade levels, assessing performance of three reading ability levels, and allowing subjects to be tested by all three modes of presentation. Embodied within this comparison of modes of presentation was an analysis of literal comprehension skills (main idea, sequences of events, and relevant details).

In analyzing literal comprehension and the interaction of three independent variables: mode of presentation, grade level, and reading ability, answers were sought for the following questions: Will students of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 differ significantly in their ability to comprehend material read silently, read orally, or presented orally on videotape? (b) Will students with good, average, or poor reading ability differ significantly in their ability to comprehend material read silently, read orally, or presented orally on videotape? (c) Will mode of presentation affect students' ability to comprehend main ideas, sequences of events, and relevant details?

To answer these questions, 18 subjects were selected at each grade level. Within each of the four grade levels an equal number of good, average, and poor readers was selected. Each subject was administered a silent reading passage, an oral reading passage, and a passage to listen to on videotape. All three passages were determined to be of equal reading difficulty by means of the establishment of specific writing requirements, application of a readability formula, and by actual testing of the passages with a cloze test.

As each passage was completed, each subject was administered the literal comprehension test which required the subject to state everything that was remembered in the passage. Scores obtained from each presentation were classified according to main idea, sequence of events, and relevant details.

The data obtained from the literal comprehension tests were analyzed by univariate analysis of variance. The essential findings of the study revealed that for the population as a whole, mode of presentation did not significantly affect literal comprehension. When the interaction of reading ability and mode of presentation was analyzed significant differences ($p < .05$) were found. Good readers attained significantly higher scores from silent reading and listening presentations, while average readers attained significantly higher scores from an oral reading presentation. Interaction of mode of presentation and the ability to identify main ideas, sequences of events, and relevant details revealed no significant differences.

SEMANTIC INTEGRATION IN NORMAL AND LEARNING DISABLED CHILDREN

KLEIN-KONIGSBERG, Estelle Eileen, Ph.D.
City University of New York, 1977

Adviser: Professor Joel Stark

Psycholinguistic research has suggested that memory for sentences is basically an interpretive, integrative process. The present study was designed to investigate how learning disabled children retain information.

Sixty children classified as learning disabled and sixty normal children were presented with a set of sentences dealing with the same subject matter. Each sentence expressed only partial meaning of one complete idea. Each complete idea was composed of four interrelated propositions (simple sentences) which could be expressed in a single complex sentence as (1) or (2): (1) "The big bear ate the chocolate candy in the woods," which consists of the four simple sentences: The bear was big. The bear ate the candy. The candy was chocolate. The bear was in the woods. (2) "The old farmer milked the brown cow in the barn," which consists of the four simple sentences: The farmer was old. The farmer milked the cow. The cow was brown. The cow was in the barn. During an incidental learning phase of the experiment subjects were never presented with those sentences expressing the complete complex ideas. The sentences presented contained from one to three of the related propositions or ELEMENTS (e.g., the bear was big; the old farmer milked the cow; the bear ate the chocolate candy in the woods). Children's ability to integrate information contained in the related sentences was measured by a recognition test which immediately followed the acquisition procedure. Subjects were read a set of sentences and asked to recognize many sentences never actually heard, but which were derivable from integrating the meanings of the sentences which they did hear. Recognition sentence TYPES included sentences actually heard during acquisition (OLD sentences), sentences not actually heard during acquisition but were consonant with the general ideas presented (NEW sentences), and sentences whose meaning was not derivable from one of the ideas presented (NONCASE sentences).

The study also attempted to determine whether semantic integration by these children was related to, or facilitated by, IMAGE factors by presenting two types of sentences. One phase of the experiment consisted of highly imageable (CONCRETE) sentences, as (1) and (2), while another phase consisted of sentences which were not easily imaged (ABSTRACT) as (3) and (4): (3) "The proud poor people were disappointed by the high taxes." (4) "The smart children did not understand the important new rules."

The goal of the study was to determine whether the related information contained in several members of a sentence set are integrated into a single representation and stored as such in memory.

Results indicated that the response pattern of learning disabled and normal children was significantly different with respect to sentence TYPE, IMAGE, AND ELEMENT classifications. Normal children could not discriminate OLD from NEW sentences which shared consistent meaning; whereas learning disabled children attended to individual sentences and lexical elements.

Order No. 77-28,228. 120 pages.

A STUDY OF GRAPHO-SEMANTIC ARRAYING BY COLLEGE FRESHMEN IN RELATION TO SELECTED MEASURES OF READING COMPREHENSION

KRAFT, Rita Bowers, Ed.D.
University of Virginia, 1977

Diagrammatic arrays of concepts based upon the Frederiksen (1972, 1973, 1975) analysis of Dawes (1964) Circle Island passage were contrasted among a sample of able and less-able college readers. The quality of subjects' arrays was judged on two basic dimensions. Both ratings of the arrangment of concepts and the arrowed relationships between the concepts yielded scores relating to quality. This variable was further examined in a number of ways. Of primary concern was differentiation of quality between able and less-able readers, the relationship of quality of array to recall of set relationships, and the relationship of array quality to reading comprehension on the cloze test.

Subjects were provided concepts from one of two paragraphs of a reading passage. They were directed to physically arrange them according to major and subordinate ideas, and to the way they were related to each other. They were then asked to draw arrows between the concepts and to respond to questions about the passage (Dawes, 1966). Finally, subjects were administered a cloze test. Discriminant analysis, canonical correlation and multiple regression, were used to analyze the data for these three major questions. Discriminant analysis was used to confirm the division of subjects as able and less-able readers according to their responses on the arraying task. Canonical correlation related the quality of array variables to the recall of set relationships. Multiple regression was employed to examine the relationship between quality of array and cloze scores.

Findings from the discriminant analysis procedure showed that array quality was an effective predictor of able and less-able reader group membership. The results of the classification analysis revealed that 75% of the subjects could be correctly classified on the basis of rated quality of array information ($\chi^2 = 25.0$; $p < .001$). For graphic portrayal of relations the results were even more clear-cut with 78% of the subjects correctly classified ($\chi^2 = 31.36$; $p < .001$).

Results of canonical correlation analysis indicated that quality of array variables and the recall of set relations variables were significantly related ($p < .001$) but only one linear combination of each set (i.e., only one canonical correlation achieved significance). For the correlation of rated quality of array with recall of set relations the first canonical was significant with a correlation magnitude of .58 ($p < .001$). When the graphic portrayal scores were linked to the recall of set relations variables a significant correlation magnitude of .51 ($p < .001$) was obtained for the first canonical.

Results of the multiple regression analyses supported the notion that both the rated quality of array and graphic portrayal of set relations were related to reading comprehension. For quality ratings the overall multiple correlation was .54, a result that was significant statistically ($p < .001$). Approximately 29% of the total variance of cloze scores could be predicted from the quality ratings variables. The overall relationship between graphic portrayal of set relations with reading comprehension on the cloze test was .47 ($p < .001$). Approximately 22% of the variance in cloze scores was explained by a linear combination of these graphic portrayal variables.

In summary, the results of these three analyses were positive and consistent with each other. Findings showed that array quality was an effective predictor of able and less-able reader group membership, that quality of array was significantly related to recall of set relationships, and that quality of array was significantly related to reading comprehension on the cloze test.

It was concluded that verification of the positive relationship of array quality to other measures and to reading comprehension on the cloze test tended to validate arrays as a teaching device. It was thought that arraying tasks of this sort might be fruitful in helping students examine and discuss the underlying aspects of comprehension.

Order No. 77-28,628, 102 pages.

READING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY NON-PROFICIENT ADULT COLLEGE STUDENTS AS OBSERVED THROUGH MISCUE ANALYSIS AND RETROSPECTION

Order No. 7801410

RAISNER, Barbara Koral, Ed.D. Hofstra University, 1978. 260pp.

The purposes of this exploratory, descriptive study were twofold. The first purpose was to describe the reading strategies of adult college students. This was accomplished by observing, recording, classifying, and analyzing their oral reading miscues according to the procedures of the Reading Miscue Inventory. The second purpose was to gain further information about these reading strategies by use of retrospective techniques whereby the reader listened to the playback of the reading and commented upon the miscues made. The findings were compared with previous research in miscue analysis on children.

The subjects were fourteen black students between the ages of twenty-two and forty-five, attending a state college. All were native speakers of English and all were designated as non-proficient readers. The four reading selections were taken from college textbooks in sociology, chemistry, psychology, and political science. Each subject read three of the four selections orally and was asked to retell the main ideas and details of the selection immediately after the reading. The readings and retellings were tape-recorded, and then played back. The subjects listened to their own playbacks while following the text silently and then stopped the tape machine any time a miscue was heard. The subjects then commented freely upon the miscue and/or their memories of any thought processes that might have accompanied it.

The miscues were coded and classified, and the retellings were rated for comprehension. The retrospective responses were classified according to whether or not they gave evidence of the subject's awareness of graphophonic, syntactic, or semantic cues. Graphs were designed to show each reader's pattern of strategies and the overall pattern for each of the four reading selections.

Selected findings were: (1) The adult readers employed all three cueing systems; (2) they relied more heavily upon graphophonic cues as the material became more difficult; (3) their ability to produce syntactically acceptable miscues varied widely with the material; (4) their ability to produce semantically acceptable miscues also varied widely with the material; (5) the number of semantically acceptable miscues produced did not seem to be related to overall comprehension; (6) there was no correspondence between rate of miscues per hundred words and comprehensive level; (7) there was a higher rate of miscue production in the easier materials than in the more difficult materials; (8) the retellings were poor and most subjects were unable to express main ideas and details effectively; and (9) the retrospective comments revealed strong awareness of graphic cues, some awareness of contextual cues, but virtually no awareness of syntactic cues.

The area in which the adult subjects appeared to differ most sharply from children was the area of grammatical sense, that is, both grammatical function and syntactically acceptable miscues. As a group, the subjects had a much lower percentage of substitutions which matched the stimuli for grammatical function than children have been found to have. They also revealed a comparative weakness in the use of syntactic information consistently over varied content materials.

The findings support a conclusion that non-proficient adult readers exhibit idiosyncratic reading strategies which vary according to the material being read. Their lack of strong grammatical sense may be related to their poor reading achievement. This possible relationship should be studied further.

THE EARLIEST CHILDHOOD RECOLLECTION AS ONE METHOD OF ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSTAND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOL FOR MALE FIFTH- AND SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS WITH READING PROBLEMS

Order No. 7731687

ROTH, Henry Joseph, Ph.D. Duke University, 1977. 209pp. Supervisor: W. Scott Gehman

The purpose of the research was to utilize earliest childhood recollections as one method of attempting to understand classroom behavior in school. The classifications arrived at from a judge's analysis of a student's earliest childhood recollection and the classifications arrived at by a teacher's perception of the same student's behaviors and attitudes were analyzed to determine the extent of teacher and judge agreement. The researcher obtained a total of 100 earliest childhood recollections during a personal interview with each subject.

Subjects were male fifth- and sixth-grade students whose reading scores were at least one year and not more than three years below grade level as measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (Hieronymous & Lindquist, 1971). The subjects were all enrolled in public schools and did not attend special classes. In terms of racial composition, 35 black and 65 white males served as subjects. All earliest childhood recollections were read, analyzed and classified by two judges and the researcher. Each judge was independently trained, by means of a standardized manual, to classify earliest childhood recollections.

Five hypotheses were tested statistically. The first three research hypotheses were formulated to assess the reliability of the instruments used in the research. It was found, using chi square and kappa (K) (Fleiss, 1971), that the instruments used in the research were reliable, $p < .001$. As a result, Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were accepted. The fourth and fifth research hypotheses were formulated to assess the concurrent validity of earliest childhood recollections. A chi square analysis was used to examine the percentage of agreement between judges' classifications of subjects and teachers' classifications of subjects. It was found that there was statistically significant agreement between judges' classifications of subjects and teachers' classifications of subjects, $p < .05$. As a result, Hypotheses 4 and 5 were accepted.

The major conclusions of the research were: (a) The classification system presented in the research can be used by different judges for the purpose of classifying subjects into the same one of ten possible categories; and (b) the classification system presented in the research can be used by judges and teachers for the purpose of obtaining statistically significant agreement between the classifications arrived at from a judge's analysis of a student's earliest childhood recollection and the classifications arrived at by a teacher's perception of the same student's behaviors and attitudes.

A STUDY OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN READING ABILITY AND SELF-CONCEPT FOR FRESHMEN IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SAUNDERS, Dorcas S., Ed.D.
The University of Mississippi, 1977

Director: Professor Robert B. Ellis

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the correlation between reading ability and self-concept of freshmen at Shelby State Community College, Memphis, Tennessee. The method of procedure included pre-testing and post-testing certain self-selected beginning students enrolled in reading classes at the mid-town campus, using the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Forms C and D, and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale.

To accomplish the research, correlation coefficients were obtained to test the relationship between pretest and posttest scores on both reading ability and self-concept and for the influence of age and sex of the study participants on reading ability and self-concept.

There were forty-two participants in the study. Of that number, 76 percent were female and 24 percent were male. Their ages ranged from 17 to 27 years, with a group mean of 20.0.

The study did not confirm a correlation between reading ability and self-concept at the .05 level of significance. Sex of the participants seemed to have significant influence on improvement in reading scores, with the females in the study scoring considerably higher than the males on both pretest and posttest in reading. However, there was no significant change in self-concept for either males or females.

Age was found to be a factor in improvement of reading ability. The group of students 20 to 22 years of age outgained either the 17 to 19 age group or the over 22 years of age group.

Recommendations were made in the study that included replication of the research using a different method of selection of participants and isolation of more variables, such as social and economic status of the participants. An additional recommendation was made that research should be conducted which combined the present study and others on the transfer of improved reading skills to academic achievement with research in self-concept for adults. Order No. 77-28,974, 76 pages.

A COMPARISON OF THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE STYLE VARIABLES IN REGULAR CLASS AND LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS' RECALL OF ORALLY PRESENTED STORIES

SHEA, Richard Andrew, University of Southern California, 1977. Co-Chairmen: Professor Gerald Hasterok, Professor Frank Fox

Purpose. This exploratory study proposed to answer experimentally two questions: (1) In listening to stories simulating a typical school task, do learning disabled (LD) students acquire the same types and amount of information as their regular class (RC) counterparts? and (2) In acquiring this information, do various language and cognitive style variables play the same role for the LD as for the RC student? These questions arise out of research reported by Wiig, Lapointe & Semel (1977), Guyer & Friedman (1975) and DeFazio (1973).

Method. Nineteen LD and nineteen RC second-to-fourth-grade students participated in this study. The LD group's chronological age averaged 111.7 months and the RC group's, 108.2 months. The IQ of the LD group averaged 98.3, ranging from 85 to 119.

An experimental vs. control group design was employed with LD students constituting the experimental and RC students the control groups. The LD students represented the entire LD population attending one school. From this school a control group was randomly selected using a limited form of matching (i.e., sex, grade, daily attending class with the LD match).

In a single session, each student individually received a battery of tests/tasks. These consisted of the Oral Commission (OC) and Likeness (LIK) and Differences (DIF) from the Detroit Test of Learning Aptitudes, the Children's Embedded Figures Test (EFT), Grammatic Cloze (GC) from the ITPA, Verbal Cloze (VC) from the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, Word Association task from Entwistle (1964) and the Associative and Inferential Recall task (AR & IR) from Rohwer & Matz (1975). For the word association task, frequency of anomalous, syntactic, paradigmatic, and tabled associations (tabled associations refers to the three most frequently emitted associations listed by Entwistle) constituted the response measure and for the remainder of the tests/tasks, frequency of correct response.

Results and Discussion. ANOVA results indicated that the RC group scored higher on VC, GC and DIF than the LD group, results paralleling other studies. Also, the RC group emitted more paradigmatic and tabled but fewer anomalous associations.

On the associative recall task, the groups did not statistically differ, yet they differed in the variables correlating with or contributing to performance. For the RC group, LIK and DIF, and for the LD group, LIK, VC, GC and syntactic associations covaried with AR.

On the inferential recall task, performance of the RC group exceeded that of the LD group and measures significantly covarying with this performance differed for the two groups. For the RC group, paradigmatic tabled (PT), tabled (T) and EFT and for the LD group, VC, GC and DIF contributed to performance on IR. Additionally, only for the RC group did interactions of measures account for more variance in IR than individual measures.

Comparison of the measures involved in IR and AR for the two groups revealed that the LD group utilized the same whereas the RC group utilized different processes. Partialing out the influence of AR on the relationships between IR and various measures revealed two important findings: (1) for the RC group the analysis indicated two related but different forms of recall – associative and inferential but (2) for the LD group, only one form of recall was indicated – associative.

Conclusions. Both groups possessed a system of variables (EFT, PT, T) having similar correlations, however, this system was more fluent for the RC group and correlated with IR. The groups appeared to differ qualitatively in the processes involved in responding to the tasks. Correct apprehension of word meaning, important to drawing correct inferences, appeared deficient in the LD group.

Given the above, the appropriateness of mainstreaming LD students should be questioned.

(Copies available from Micrographics Department, Doheny Library, USC, Los Angeles, CA. 90007.)

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SELECTED ORAL LANGUAGE FACTORS AND READING PROFICIENCY Order No. 7802084

SILVA, Fátima Sampaio, Ph.D. The University of Arizona, 1977. 99pp. Director: Vivian E. Cox

As a natural outgrowth of the belief that the four language arts are interrelated, there has been an increasing interest in determining the contribution of oral language competence to success in reading. Yet the most systematic investigations regarding oral language and reading were concerned with middle and upper grade children and all of them assessed reading by means of standardized tests. Hence, there is need to study the influence of language competence on beginning reading and to use new instruments for judging reading proficiency.

This study analyzed the relationship between the oral language structure of six-year-old children and their reading proficiency at the end of the first year of exposure to a planned

reading program. Oral language was analyzed by means of the following syntactic and vocabulary variables: the mean length of communication units, the number of movables, the number of subordinate clauses, the number of clauses per communication unit and the type token ratio. Reading was assessed by the patterns of comprehension, the patterns of grammatical relationships and the retelling score of the Reading Miscue Inventory.

The subjects were selected from one open school setting according to three criteria: being six years old; not having attended that school previously and not having been exposed to a planned reading program before. From all students enrolled in the school, twenty-five met all criteria and were selected to comprise the population.

Oral language samples were collected during sharing time, and in a private interview between the researcher and the subject. Reading samples were collected by having each subject read one story appropriate to his level. For analysis purposes the subjects were classified into groups according to the stories read. Correlation coefficients were computed among oral language and reading variables.

The findings of the correlational analysis revealed that three oral language variables -- the mean length of communication units, the number of subordinate clauses and the number of clauses per communication units -- correlated significantly ($p < .001$) with the patterns of comprehension, the patterns of grammatical relationships and the retelling score of the Reading Miscue Inventory. The number of movables did not correlate significantly with the patterns of comprehension but it did ($p < .05$) with the patterns of grammatical relationships and the retelling score. The type token ratio did not correlate significantly with any reading proficiency variable.

Further analysis of oral language and reading samples yielded the following additional results: (1) significant interrelationship among all syntactic variables; (2) high frequency of movables of time; (3) high frequency of adverb clauses; (4) lack of relationship between age, sex and the oral language variables; (5) significant interrelationship among all reading variables; (6) greater rate of correction for syntactically and semantically unacceptable miscues than for fully acceptable ones; (7) great percentage of unsuccessful correction in the readiness and Level 2 groups; (8) great percentage of substitution miscues in all groups except the readiness one which had a greater percentage of omission; (9) inverse relationship between the mean number of miscues per hundred words (MPHW) and the reading level of the subjects; and (10) significant correlation between MPHW and the reading variables.

The findings of this study indicate that six-year-old children differ in linguistic competence and this competence is reflected on early reading proficiency. They also prove that even beginning readers naturally use language constraints while reading.

The author suggested the findings hold implications for language arts programs in today's schools. A systematic approach toward oral language assessment of preschool and school age children and a revision of current reading methodology were highly recommended.

VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL CROSS-MODAL LEARNING IN GOOD AND POOR READERS AT TWO AGE LEVELS

SIMMEROK, Bruce David, Ph.D. University of Southern California, 1977. Chairman: Professor Gerald Hasterok

This investigation deals with the problem of learning disabilities as evidenced in low reading ability. Based on clinical work, Myklebust has suggested a conceptualization of learning disabilities which sees learning as taking place through semi-autonomous systems. Children may be able to process information when presented in one modality but not when information requires a connection between modalities. Geschwind has theorized that man's ability to use language, particularly written language, is anatomically based on making cross-modal associations. The areas related to these abilities are relatively late in developing. It has thus been hypothesized that children who are behind in the ability to learn to read may have a deficit in the ability to learn cross-modal association. Attempts to evaluate this hypothesis have had mixed results depending on the nature of the stimuli used, whether verbal or non-verbal, and the age of the children used in the study. The purpose of this study was to determine whether poor readers have a deficiency in the ability to learn cross-modal associations, whether this is true of young and old readers, and whether this is true using verbal or non-verbal stimuli.

Eighty children were randomly selected from a school district, 40 good readers and 40 poor readers. Half of the subjects were from the fifth grade and half were from the third grade. All of the subjects were in the normal range of intelligence and had no deficits in hearing, sight, or speech or had English as a second language.

Half of the subjects received a verbal cross-modal paired associate learning task, in which they had to associate auditory nonsense syllables with letter-like shapes. The other half received a non-verbal cross-modal paired associate learning task, in which they had to associate an auditory noise with the same letter-like shapes as in the verbal task.

The learning scores were subjected to analysis of variance, testing for effects of grade level, reading level, and interaction for both verbal and non-verbal tasks.

The results of the analysis showed that for the non-verbal condition there was no difference between the performance of good and poor readers. There was also no difference in the grade level nor an interaction of these variables. For the verbal task, good readers performed significantly better than the poor readers. Older readers also performed significantly better than younger readers.

A further analysis was done of the types of errors made on the verbal task. Some of the subjects made errors by associating the wrong nonsense syllable with the visual stimuli. Others mixed the phonetic elements of the nonsense syllable, a transpositional error. Analysis of variance of these errors showed poor readers made significantly more transpositional errors.

The results suggest that cross-modal deficits in poor readers are found only when verbal stimuli are used. Closer examination of the verbal responses indicated that the deficit of the poor reader may be in the processing of verbal information. Good readers appear to process the nonsense syllable as a single unit and can thus focus their attention on the association part of the task. Poor readers appeared to require some of their attention to integrate the elements of the response terms and thus take longer to make the correct associations.

While this study could not rule out the possibility of a cross-modal deficit, it does appear that it is related only to verbal stimuli. Furthermore, a large portion of the variance for that task could be attributed to poor auditory processing of verbal information.

Implications for further research pointed to evaluation of storage and retrieval of auditory information.

(Copies available from Micrographics Department, Doheny Library, USC, Los Angeles, CA 90007.)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARD READING AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SELF AS RELATED TO READING ACHIEVEMENT

SIMPSON, Patricia Stewart, Ph.D.
Georgia State University – School of Education, 1977

Purpose

This study was conceived as the result of the investigator's clinical impression that the perception of self is related to reading performance; that is, positive feelings about self contribute to success in reading, and one outcome of a negative self image often appears to be failure or inefficient reading. Another observation that has emerged in juxtaposition to this theory deals with feelings and attitudes toward reading. Specifically, good readers with a positive mental picture of self manifest a favorable attitude toward reading; whereas poor or inefficient readers display a dislike for reading. In addition, there is a group of students who have been designated as good readers, but who perceive themselves as non-readers.

A search of the professional literature suggested that relatively little research on attitudes has been done in the area of reading education. Believing strongly in the influence that attitudes toward reading and attitudes toward self exert on reading performance, the author explored these attitudes of elementary students. Specifically, the focus of this study was: (1) to assess the strength of the relationships among attitudes toward reading, attitudes toward self, and socioeconomic status, and (2) to determine the degree of dependence of reading achievement on a linear relationship of these three independent variables.

Method and Procedures

The data were obtained by administering the Stanford Reading Achievement Test, subtest Reading Comprehension (1973 edition), the Estes Reading Attitude Scale, and the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale to 94 fifth grade students enrolled in three different schools. These schools were randomly selected and represented as wide a spread as possible of the socioeconomic continuum of a large suburban school system in Decatur, Georgia. A multiple regression and correlation analysis was employed to analyze the relationship between the dependent variable reading achievement and the independent variables attitudes toward reading, attitudes toward self, and socioeconomic status. Significance tests were run to confirm or reject the null hypotheses.

Result

Even though the regression of reading achievement on attitudes toward reading, attitudes toward self, and socioeconomic status proved to be significant at the .005 level, the linear combination of these independent variables was not found to be a good predictor of reading achievement. Of the independent variables employed, the findings indicated that the variance in reading achievement is significantly related to knowledge of attitudes about self.

Conclusion

Reading achievement was significantly influenced by attitudes toward self. However, attitudes toward reading and socioeconomic status accounted for no significant contribution to reading achievement. Perhaps this study begins to lessen the distance between the assumption of educators that a relationship does exist between attitudes toward reading and reading achievement, and the lack of support evidenced by the existing research. These findings suggest that attitudes toward reading are a separate entity, unrelated to academic success. Apparently, what is important is not one's attitudes toward reading, but one's attitudes toward self. Order No. 77-29,335, 113 pages.

READING ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTITUDINAL FACTORS OF DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS Order No. 7801518

SUKCHOTRAT, Maneeratana Vanasin, Ph.D. The Florida State University, 1977. 108pp. Major Professor: Edwin H. Smith

This investigator was concerned with determining the relationship between reading achievement and the attitudinal factors of self-concept, attitude toward school, and level of career aspiration of 151 disadvantaged students in grades seven, eight, and nine who were enrolled in a compensatory education program during the 1975–1976 academic year. The instruments utilized were the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale, The Demos D Scale, and the Occupational Aspiration Scale. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for determining the degrees of the associations. The results indicated that, for the population used, the reading achievement was related to the following variables: (a) Self-Concept: for the combined seventh, eighth, and ninth grades; however, when separated into grade groups, such relationship was found only for the eighth grade; (b) Attitude Toward School: for all three grades; (c) Career Aspiration Level: for the combined seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. The findings indicated that self-concept and attitude toward school were related to reading levels and that the better readers tended to have more positive self-concepts and better attitudes toward school than did the poorer readers. It was also found that the better readers were also more realistic in their career aspirations.

RELATION OF FIGURAL ANALYSIS AND READING GROWTH IN GRADES TWO THROUGH SIX Order No. 7730413

WRIGHT, Michael Robert, Ed.D. Northern Illinois University, 1977. 84pp.

The intent of this study was to determine whether reading improvement was significantly related to figural analysis ability among elementary school children. Figural analysis tests are an often used method of evaluating the academic potential of students, especially when the examiner does not want the level of past reading and school related achievement of the student to influence the estimate.

In the present study figural analysis was measured by the non-verbal reasoning section of Scholastic Testing Service's Educational Development Series. Reading was measured by the reading section of the test. Correlations found in past research literature showed positive relationships, generally running between .25 and .50, between figural analysis ability and reading scores. However, in the one study which was located concerning reading growth, the relationship between figural analysis ability and growth in reading was not significant.

The relationships studied in this research were explored through semi-partial correlations. This technique was used to remove the variation due to the initial reading level from the reading level found in subsequent years and correlated the remaining variance with the figural analysis score. These correlations were reported for groups on the basis of the sex of the student, grade level of initial testing (second or third) and on the basis of whether the student was a high or low reading achiever. Within these groups reading growth was measured over 1, 2, and 3 year periods.

There was a low but rather consistently significant correlation between figural analysis and residual reading growth when it was averaged over the 1, 2, and 3 year reading growth intervals ($r = .06$, $p = .0072$). The figural analysis-residual reading growth relationship tended to be at its strongest among females and when the correlations were based on second grade initial

reading and figural analysis scores. These relationships were not statistically significant, however. In addition, there was a tendency for these relationships to increase in strength as the period of reading growth lengthened from one to three years. The differences between reading growth intervals were not tested for significance in the present study.

Among the low reading achievers the same generalizations were true. In the low achiever group there was a statistically significant average correlation between figural analysis and reading growth when the correlations were based on second grade initial testing ($r = .19$, $p = .0418$), but not when based on third grade initial testing. This relationship was also stronger among females over long (three year) reading growth intervals.

The figural analysis-residual reading growth relationship was strongest for females and for extended periods of reading growth. One interpretation of this finding was that those are both cases in which reading growth variance might be expected to be at its greatest. If this interpretation is accurate, the relationship may not be at its maximum unless the reading growth intervals are further lengthened and testing is started at earlier grade levels than those used in the present study. This change was suggested for further research in this area. In addition, the suggestion was made that further research include a specific reading program beyond that included in the general education program. Another suggestion made was that in using figural analysis scores to predict reading improvement, additional information beyond the figural analysis scores be included in the decision.

The final conclusion is that, when nothing out of the routine is done for pupils, figural analysis scores would add little to predictions of reading scores beyond that gained from earlier reading scores.

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